

# Lead *and Your Tap Water*



Lead is a naturally occurring metal that is used in many consumer products.

Tucson Water analyzes tap water samples from customer homes every four years for lead and copper according to the United States Environmental Protection Agency's (USEPA) guidelines. ***The level of lead in our groundwater and tap water has never exceeded the USEPA's action level of 15 parts per billion.***

## How can lead get into groundwater and tap water?

Lead can get into the groundwater from erosion of natural deposits. And lead can get into tap water by corrosion: the corrosion of premise plumbing containing lead, brass or chrome plated brass fixtures, fittings and solder and from old water service lines. The amount of lead in your water depends on the types and amounts of minerals in the water, if water stays in the pipes more than 6 hours without being used, the amount of corrosion of the pipes and fixtures, the water's acidity and its temperature. Homes built before 1996 are more likely to have plumbing components containing lead. New homes are also at risk for containing lead because new plumbing fittings, including those labeled "lead-free", may contain up to 8 percent lead.

Tucson Water is responsible for delivering high quality tap water to customers but cannot control the range or age of plumbing materials and components used inside a premise.

## Who is at risk for elevated lead levels? Are there health effects?

Children 6 years and under are at the greatest risk. According to the USEPA, the primary sources of lead exposure for children are swallowing or breathing in lead paint chips and dust – not our tap water. "Infants and children who drink water containing lead in excess of the USEPA action level could experience delays in their physical or mental development. Children could show slight deficits in attention span and learning abilities. Adults who drink this water over many years could develop kidney problems or high blood pressure." <http://water.epa.gov/drink/info/lead>

## How can I find out if there is lead in my tap water?

There are two ways to learn more about lead in your tap water:

- 1)** Review Tucson Water's Annual Water Quality Report on line [tucsonaz.gov/water/annual\\_wq\\_reports](http://tucsonaz.gov/water/annual_wq_reports) or request a copy by calling (520) 791-2544.
- 2)** Have your tap water tested by a certified laboratory. Contact the Arizona Department of Health Services at [www.azdhs.gov/lab/license/certification/index.htm](http://www.azdhs.gov/lab/license/certification/index.htm) or call (602) 364-0720 to locate a certified laboratory. Labs may charge \$20 to \$100 to analyze one tap water sample.

## TIPS

## What are some tips to reduce exposure to lead in drinking water?

- Run your tap water to flush out the lead for 30 seconds to 2 minutes or until it becomes cold or reaches a steady temperature before using for drinking and cooking.
- If your home has a lead service line, contact Tucson Water to replace it.
- Use a rinse aid to fight film and deposits.
- Use cold water for cooking and preparing baby formula – hot water dissolves lead more quickly than cold water.
- Explore a simple treatment system such as a faucet or pitcher filter to help remove lead from tap water. If you opt to install a treatment system, be sure it is certified by the National Sanitation Foundation to remove lead and that you conduct regular, proper maintenance.

If you have questions or comments about water quality, email [WQinfo@tucsonaz.gov](mailto:WQinfo@tucsonaz.gov) or call (520) 791-5945

Plumbing fixtures may impact water quality, a key component of **Water Reliability** today and in the future.  
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**Water Reliability**

[tucsonaz.gov/water](http://tucsonaz.gov/water)